

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed December 13, 2005 has been received and reviewed. In response to this Office Action, claims 24 and 30 have been amended; claim 29 has been canceled; and claims 65-74 have been added. After entry of this amendment, claims 24-28, 30-35, and 62-74 are pending.

In the Office Action, claims 29-34 and 64 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter. The Office Action stated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 24 has been amended to include the subject matter of dependent claim 29. Claim 65 has been added, and incorporates the subject matter of claims 24, 25, 29, and 30. Claims 24 and 65 are the only currently pending independent claims. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims are allowable.

The Office Action rejected claims 24, 25, 28, and 35 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,425,751 to Bergeron et al. The Office Action rejected claims 26, 27, 62, and 63 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Bergeron et al. '751 in view of Woolford (U.S. Patent No. 5,249,950). Applicants disagree with these rejections. To expedite prosecution of the application, including avoiding erosion of the patent term, Applicants have amended independent claim 24, as discussed above, to include the subject matter of allowable dependent claims 29. This amendment renders moot these rejections. Applicants expressly reserve the right to pursue claims of identical or broader scope as the claim of original claim 24 in further continuation or divisional applications.

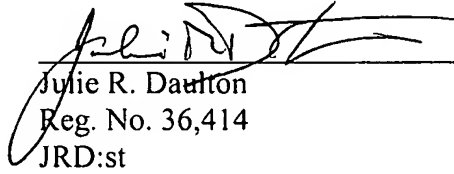
In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Applicants request reconsideration and a Notice of Allowance.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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